

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0548

January 19, 2022

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Attorney General Merrick Garland,

As you are aware from recent reports, organized crime groups continue to wreak havoc across California. Organized retail theft and violence are causing many new safety and consumer risks. Now we are seeing the same organized attacks on cargo trains. These attacks continue, without penalty, thanks to the state's disastrous progressive policies and lack of criminal prosecution. The effects of the continued theft and looting are felt throughout the country.

The supply chain crisis has created a new wave of violence at railroad tracks in Lincoln Heights. Organized groups are now stealing packages, equipment, and other important products from railroad cars in Los Angeles County. According to Union Pacific, there has been a 160% increase in thefts along railroad tracks in L.A. County since December 2020 and there is growing concern that this vandalism is being committed by well-organized crime organizations.¹

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Omicron variant spreading throughout Southern California, many individuals have used e-commerce to buy products instead of going to local stores. Some of these purchases include COVID-19 tests, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), electronics, and food products – which are out of stock at many of our local stores due to supply chain shortages. Freight transportation has been vital to ensuring these products get to consumers and retailers, especially given the shortage of truck drivers in California.²

In addition, it is important to note that many of these purchases are not just delivered throughout the State of California, but also throughout the United States, affecting interstate and international commerce. Therefore, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the

¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-01-16/rail-theft-soars-los-angeles-pilfered-packages-littering-tracks>

² <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/shortage-truck-drivers-concerns-california-ag-producers>

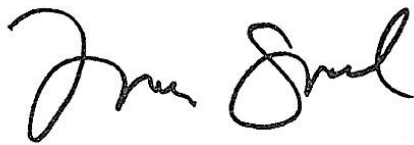
Department of Justice (DOJ) play a vital role in federally prosecuting the epidemic of robberies on all freight transportation.

Should this criminal activity continue, access to PPE and other important items may be scarce. Action is needed, and a continued lack of urgency will lead to further crime and delays of necessary items to consumers.

We urge you to expeditiously prosecute and hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable. Bottlenecks at our local ports and the soft-on-crime approaches by the Los Angeles District Attorney have contributed to these types of thefts in our local communities. Your office must use every tool available to end this type of violence and organized crime.

Thank you in advance for your response and your timely attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Michelle Steel
Member of Congress



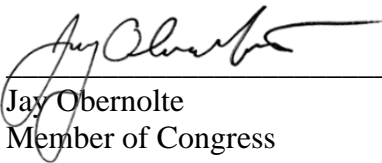
Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress



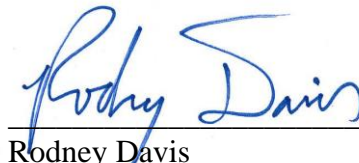
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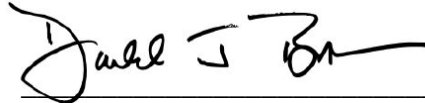
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Cc: Kristi Koons Johnson, Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Tracy Wilkison, Interim United States Attorney